LIFE IN LESU

CHAPTER I

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

131 THREE degrees south of the equator in the Western Pacific is the village of Lesu, on the east coast of New Ireland, part of the Bismarck Archipelago, a group of islands lying north-
142 east of Australia. The New Irelanders are the tall, more or less well-built Melanesian type, with kinky black hair, brown skin, and somewhat negroid features, and are a hospitable, kindly, good-natured people. In the past the
291 men wore no clothing at all and the women only a straw
177 apron. To-day, however, because of white influence, everyone wears a loin-cloth, and the women sometimes wear blouses, but most of the time these are omitted.

133 In size, New Ireland is the second largest island of the Bismarck Archipelago, and is long and narrow in shape. Running through the centre is a low range of mountains,
491 about 3,000 feet at their highest altitude. Along the coast, beginning at the northern end, runs a road for over a hundred miles, one of the few roads in the whole Territory of New Guinea. The road follows the coast in a winding fashion, uphill and downhill, and over it travel the natives, by foot, and occasionally by bicycle, from one village to another. Long stretches of road have on one side the dense bush with its thick undergrowth of tangled vines, its bright-coloured flowers, among them the familiar south-sea hibiscus, the tall coconut palms, the delicate bamboo trees, the nodding areca palms, and many other trees over which fly
33 brightly plumed birds. On the other side lies a sea which is dazzlingly brilliant in the sunshine, its glare broken here

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

but when their preparations are finished, about four o'clock, they take their ease and chat and gossip lightly. Perhaps they wander over to another hamlet and visit the women there. At sunset they return home, feed the pigs with the scrapings from the taro, and, if they have fowls,[1] these are also fed. The girls and younger children go to the beach waterholes, in which the sea-water is filtered as it trickles up through the sand, and they fill the hollow bamboo stems with drinking-water. The time for this varies with the tide.

Night comes quickly and by seven it is almost completely dark. Each family is gathered around its own fire in the compound in front of the house. Some sit on the ground, and others may be on a bamboo bench constructed near the fire. Now they have their evening meal, the inevitable baked taro, perhaps varied with a bit of fish or a few crabs. Throughout the village every family is gathered as a unit around its own fire, and there is an air of peace in the place.

How the rest of the evening is spent will depend upon the moon. On dark nights, unlit by the moon, everyone goes to bed quite early, an hour or so after they finish the evening meal, but on moonlight nights the scene is different. Even when the moon is only half full the village is illumined by its beams, and when it is completely rounded the place fairly shimmers in its rays. The leaves of the coconut palms shine bright green and the bamboo trees sparkle with fireflies. The beach is like a cold white streak lying between the dark blue waves and the green trees. The tall arica palm nods its head gracefully in the background. The fires gleam throughout the village and aid the moon in throwing tall shadows, which make the houses seem small and insignificant. Now there is gaiety in the night. Children are playing on the beach imitating a ritual dance. Adults are visiting each other in their compounds, or strolling about, and

[1] Chickens have been introduced through white contact.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

of eight boys, ranging in age approximately between nine and eleven. Six of the boys were of the Hawk moiety and two of the Eagle. They all came from that section of Lesu known as Tagam, formerly another village separate from Lesu.[1]

PREPARATIONS

The initial preparations are begun about ten months in advance, when the garden magician makes taro magic, and the rain magician rain magic, in order to ensure a good crop. At this same time arrangements are made for the purchase of the pigs for the future feast. The men who will display *malanggans* are also busy superintending their carving. These and the dancing-masks are begun four or five months before the rites are held,[2] and the work is done in a secluded place, away from all observation.

The first communal work occurs about a month before the boys are circumcised, and consists of the building of the enclosure in which they will later be secluded. All the men and boys of Lesu and some from the neighbouring villages of Ambwa and Lagania assist in this work. The men from Ambwa reach the hamlet of Penguli (in Lesu) early in the morning, where they are joined by the Lesu men. They are all in a gay mood. With the *kerapo* leaves[3] stuck in their hair and in their belts, about fifty of them go to a clearing a short distance from the hamlet of Penguli. Here they cut down the bamboo trees and then crack the trunks at the circular rings with their knives,[4] working with enthusiasm and zest. Then, placing the bamboo trunks on their shoulders, they walk down to the beach and along it

[1] See Chapter I, p. 32.
[2] Making of the *malanggans* described, pp. 211, 212.
[3] The *kerapo* leaf is used decoratively on all ritual occasions.
[4] Knives have been recently introduced. Men who have been away to work on plantations have them, and they were the most popular gift which I could make.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

881 another place, and at one feast Ballock urges them to dance
535 well, otherwise he says the women will not like them.

881 Like the dancing, the accompanying music is traditional,
535 but frequently there are variations in the former. Ballock
177 has evidently, as far as I can ascertain, made up the variations on the particular dance he is teaching the women. Sometimes if a boy from another island is in the village, he will teach the natives a dance from his island. One of my servants, though a native of New Ireland, had worked for a long time in the white man's capital, Rabaul, in New Britain, and she taught the Lesu women a dance she had learned there.[1] Frequently boys from different islands, working on one plantation, teach each other their dances. Out of the growing contact between the natives from various islands, it appears that the dance is the cultural trait which is the most easily and frequently diffused.

881 In the meantime the growth of the new moon is watched with interest, for when it is full that will be the time for the rites.

The last two nights preceding the rites the rehearsing is very much in earnest. Just before this they had slackened a bit. At the end of the next to last one, which is held earlier than the others at dusk, each woman pays Ballock one [437] stick of tobacco for his instruction. Most of them go to bed early, for the morrow will be a strenuous day.

Early in the morning the women, carrying the taro on their backs, start off for the hamlet of Ponatlege. Arriving there are also women from Ambwa, Langania, and the other hamlets of Lesu. About seventy-five or a hundred women are present. Immediately they begin the usual cooking preparations. Most of the men from Tagam are busy bringing in leaves and building the *liga*, but a few old ones sit on the ground doing nothing. At intervals the *kolamuth* is

[1] The Lesu women asked me if I would teach them a dance from my country. I refrained.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

men who are maternal uncles of the boys being circumcised —rush on the scene, carrying knives, fishing-nets, and other implements, and circle around one pile of food, which will later be given to the Eagle boys in the enclosure. Each in turn holds up the implement she carries and makes a speech.

One, holding up a hatchet: "With this hatchet my husband knows how to work in the garden. My garden has no trees or bushes in it, and I plant the taro. My husband plants the bananas. I cut them down with this hatchet. Now my husband's *tsringi* (her husband's sister's son) goes into the enclosure. I talk true to all you women and to all you men."

Another holds up a plate.[1] "You see this plate. My man goes fishing in the sea and catches many fish. Now I cook the fish in the saucepan, and then I drink it from the plate. Now I talk to all you women and all you men. By and by you will say, 'Ah, she is ashamed.'[2] I do not like to talk any more. My talk is finished."

Another holds up a basket used for catching fish. "My husband takes the basket and goes into the sea. He catches many fish. He brings them home. I eat plenty of fish. I eat bananas, but not so many of them. Now my husband's little *tsringi* has gone into the enclosure. I do not hide anything from all of you. I talk true. I do not like to make a long speech. I have finished."

One, holding up a knife, says: "This knife belongs to the work in the garden. My husband takes the knife and cuts firewood with it. Now I, I am a woman, and am not strong enough to get firewood. I like to

[1] A few enamelled plates have been introduced by boys who have been away working on plantations. This woman is describing the making of soup, which has also been introduced with saucepans.

[2] The shame is for not talking truly.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

423 use. This is an informal custom rather than a rigid rule. Should another person want to plant on the ground, he would usually talk the matter over first with the son or daughter of the person who had formerly planted on it, and invariably he would receive permission to plant. But there is no way of preventing him from planting the ground should he desire to do so without asking permission. The land is considered as belonging to the community, although it is customary for individuals to plant on certain sections of it.

The ownership of the village land is based on the principle of locality, as differing from the ownership of the clan land, which is based upon the principle of kinship. But though a native changes his residence, he does not lose his ownership in the land of the village where he was born. This principle is brought out quite clearly in some recent purchases of land by the Mandated Government. The selling of land [425 / 771] is an innovation, brought in by the white Government, principally for the benefit of planters. When any such purchase is made, the consent of all the mature people of the village must be gained. If some village-owned land is sold to the Government, a man born in the village, but who has moved away to another, will return to his own village to receive the part of the payment which is due to him. It is considered that the land of the village where he was born belongs to him, or, as one native put it, to him and his mother, as residence is matrilocal and lineage matrilineal. For a concrete example, a man born at Ambwa married a woman from the village of Libba and went to live there. When some Ambwa land was sold, he went back to get his share in the payment, for, as he explained, this was his mother's village and his. Should any of the Libba land be sold he is not entitled to any of the payment. His children and his wife will receive a share, and sometimes his wife's relatives will give him a small part of the payment, not

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

cement leaves, coconut, taro, and so on for four layers. The outer leaves are then wrapped around it to make a bundle, which is tied with vine and baked in the *liga*. All the preparations for the cooking of the *beta*, except the scraping of the taro, is done by the men. It is eaten by both sexes and much enjoyed.

In the past snakes were also eaten. They were killed by beating them on the head, and then cut up, wrapped in leaves, and baked in the *liga*, and were considered good food. To-day, however, it would be considered dangerous to eat a snake, because of the part it played in the Garden of Eden story, as told by the missionaries. In some vague and unexplainable way the snake is now considered a taboo food, even among unmissionized natives. They may not have accepted any of the Christian morals or tenets, or even know much about them, but the snake story they take seriously, and it is the snake which stands out as a prominent part of the Fall of Man.

Other Cooking

There is only one leaf, *mutil*, resembling a spinach leaf, which is cooked. Recently some of those who have worked on a plantation have brought home with them a saucepan, and the leaf is boiled, together with the milk of the coconut and the shredded coconut. In the past it was wrapped in other leaves and baked in the *liga*.

Unripe bananas are buried in the sand for a week. They are left on the stalk and laid in a trench-like hole on the sandy beach and then covered over with sand. The result is a very soft squashy banana, preferred by natives to the raw one. It is prepared in this way for a feast, but on ordinary occasions the raw banana is eaten.

Pawpaws are usually eaten raw, although they are sometimes baked in the *liga*. Other fruits are eaten raw.

In the past these natives were cannibals, but they ate only

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

tions in the public speeches made at feasts and rites. Boasting is considered very bad taste in Lesu.

Certain general characteristics of the society help also to set the social patterns of behaviour. For instance, the society is conservative and stable. The old people are in control, and change takes place very slowly. Also, these men and women of Lesu know security in several ways. First, as it has already been pointed out, they are economically secure and have no fear of poverty or old age. Secondly, they have faith. They believe in their magic, in their spirit doubles, in the value of their rites. Heretics are absent. This very real belief gives the Melanesian the kind of security that a truly devout and unquestioning Christian has. Even the newly missionized native, as far as I could observe, is not a heretic. His Christian beliefs form a superficial and upper layer laid over his own beliefs, which are not denied. The two systems simply exist on different levels, and neither meet nor conflict.[1] Finally, the society is realistic. The education of children is to really train them for adult life. There is thus a facing of situations as they exist and an adequate preparation for them. Side by side with the realism is the highly symbolic nature of this society. In the constantly used magic a leaf, a stone, a sound, a combination of words are used as symbols for certain desired ends. Before such an undertaking as getting the sea-worm (*beta*) a game is played resembling a tug-of-war, which symbolizes the drawing in of the *beta* from the sea. Some of the dances are both dramatic and symbolic performances.

Apart from the social patterns, we have also noted individual patterns. Sometimes we have seen the individual behaving quite differently from the social pattern. This may

[1] This applies only to natives who have accepted Christianity after they were mature. The psychological effect on the very young children who are now being sent to mission schools may be very different.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

the *tinuato* wanders around near the place of death and makes its presence known by a low whistle. Although it has no malignant qualities, it is regarded with great fear.

There is no belief in life after death (except for the ghost), in rewards or punishments, or in any deity. It is interesting to observe that for the missionised native it is the *tinuato* which goes to hell, and it is this also which has become the Christian soul.

These people, until very recently, were cannibals. All the adults of the community in which I lived had been cannibals before the white government stopped the practice. But it was only the bodies of enemies killed in warfare which were eaten, and never the body of a friend, relative, or member of the same village. As far as could be ascertained, there was no theory of imbibing the strength of the enemy warrior. It was merely another meat dish in a diet which was mostly vegetable.[4]

Cremation rather than burial was formerly practised, but as far as could be learned there has been no change in the rites. In the past the body was burned and the bones buried. The cemeteries existed then just as they do to-day—each hamlet with its own. In the rites to-day cremation is simply omitted and the whole body is buried instead of just the bones, as in the past.[5]

The following description, covering the three chronological periods, brings out the divisions among the survivors who are grouped according to their kinship to the dead person, their degree of mourning and their responsibility for the rites.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE DEATH

In the period immediately preceding death there is even then a selection of certain relatives who will perform special duties towards the dying person. It is always the parents or children who take care of the sick person. Before death occurs, it is to the house of the parents or children that the patient is moved. The spouse is very attentive also, and the rest of the community show their interest by cooking in the hamlet of the sick person and by dis-

[4]However, one can never completely trust information gathered from hearsay only, and with no opportunity to observe the phenomenon itself.

[5]White control is responsible for the change.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

and opposite moiety, *i.e.*, an "Eagle" woman would be washed by a "Hawk" woman, and vice versa. The same people then carry the corpse (male or female) to the men's house, or to the house where the person had formerly lived. In discussing the matter, a native will tell you that the custom is to take the corpse to the men's house, but as a matter of actual practice the writer observed that it was more often brought back to its former house, or, in the case of an old woman, to a daughter's house. The corpse is clothed in its loin cloth (this of course is an innovation, the loin cloth having been introduced by the whites) and set upon a bamboo structure called *bāk*,[7] in the doorway of the house. The corpse is propped up on this structure and the only native explanation is that this is something to hold the body over which the mourners will wail. At most of the funerals witnessed the *bāk* was there, but not functioning. Instead, the corpse was lying inside the house on the usual bamboo bed. The reason given for not using the *bāk* was that the corpse could not be made to sit upon it—the legs were too swollen, or some other similar reason. As soon as the body has been set upon its *bāk*, or bier, wailing is continued. By this time the people from hamlets near by have arrived, and soon those from the distant part of the village have come also. Word is immediately carried to the neighbouring villages and from these come in particular the clan relatives of the dead person. The wailing is kept up almost continuously day and night, until the body is buried. This period may be from one to three days, depending upon the age and prestige of the person who has died. During this interval preparations for the burial feast are in progress and naturally the longer the interval the more food can be collected and prepared.

The women go to the gardens and bring in the taro and then begin the work of scraping it and preparing it to be baked. Sometimes one sees the women scraping the taro and wailing at the same time. The men, in the meantime, are bringing in firewood, tending the *liga* (the pile of hot stones in which the food is baked), or are concerned with cooking pigs or fish. The actual direction of the preparations for the feast is in the hands of a clan relative—

[7] *ā* as in hat.

3:Chinnery G, E-5 (1929)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

goods. Each year this economic bond between European and native residents grows stronger, and the two racial interests become more interdependent.

The native inhabitants pay taxes to the Government, and keep 150 miles of road between Kavieng and Karu in proper order for motor traffic, each village group being responsible for its own section.

These are some of the principal developments in the material life of the people as a result of European settlement. On the cultural and social life, chiefly due to mission influence, additional far-reaching changes have taken place, and these increase as the missions expand. Two mission organizations are now operating in the district—Roman Catholic and Methodist. The principal Roman Catholic stations are at Lemakot, Munuwai and Lemasong, and those of the Methodist Mission are at Maiom and Pinigindu.

The progress of European organizations has transformed the life of the natives, whose indigenous institutions have either died out or, like the *maligans*, are tottering to extinction with scarcely a hope of surviving the present generation. The people of coming generations will have to fit into the social and religious fabric being woven for them by the driving force of European industrial, religious and administrative control now thoroughly established in the district.

With the object of making the survey in question, I left Rabaul on Saturday, 23rd March, 1929, and on Monday, the 25th March, commenced work in the villages between Kavieng and Karu. Completing the preliminary census on the 11th May, I came back to Rabaul to tabulate my notes, and, this done, returned to the east coast villages, where I remained from the 1st June until the 26th June, investigating special phenomena indicated by the tables.

Thus the work was divided into two parts, firstly, an enumeration of the population in their villages, and, secondly, an investigation of the figures together with social and religious features seemingly of value to the issue.

A specimen of the form used in recording the names and demographic features of the inhabitants is appended. (Appendix 1.) In regard to the actual method, however, a generalized explanation is necessary.

The inhabitants live in small family settlements along the coast-line, excepting mountain and forest groups, who reside in the bush. Each settlement has its own small plot of land, clumps of coco-nut trees, and two or three living houses. They are scattered along the whole coast-line a few yards or 100 yards or so apart, according to the political boundaries and space available. A group of several family settlements forms a political division, which is administered by the Government with the aid of local natives of influence and repute, who are appointed Luluai and Tul-tul and officiate under the supervision of the District Officer according to authority set out in the Native Administration

3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

A large number of the apparently sterile women are very old. The usual reply to a question concerning the lack of children is that the bearing of children is a burden which interferes with the efficiency of women in garden and road work, or the oft repeated, "laze along push push", one suggesting deliberate abortion, and the other lack of desire.

APATHY.

We are dealing with a people who have been profoundly upset by the coming of European settlement, which during the first few years rudely interrupted local conditions of life, and practically withdrew the majority of able-bodied males and many females of reproductive age from the villages, and continued to drain the population of its best blood year after year. The old German methods of uniting the stocks meant, in effect, that bush people and coastal people were deprived of their racial and social individuality, and compelled to live more or less on one another's ground, thus perforce losing the very characteristics that make for group stability. By the land alienation that took place during these years, natives found themselves being gradually pushed into corners here and there by the ever-expanding European settlement. The road work and other uses to which the relatively few remaining able-bodied men were put left small time for gardening and other native occupations. On top of these disturbing influences came the Mission with its new cultures. Pressure was brought to bear on all practices having the slightest resemblance to European standards of immorality. The natives who led an active sexual life with more or less promiscuity, in which they were constantly stimulated by various dances that gave incentive to and opportunity for sexual expression, now heard that their most natural and spontaneous activities were things of which to be ashamed, unless regulated in accordance with the standards taught by the Mission. As a prominent headman said to me, "the romance, excitement, and adventure of sex have gone. Always the native teachers speak of it in church and school as a thing of shame. Before, men and women gratified their desires when and where they found them. Now, to go into the bush with your lover is to be publicly shamed. The Missions say to the people who are married, 'You must have more children', but how can there be children without sex life, and how can there be sex life without sex play. Our night dances are practically forbidden, romance and adventure now appear to be sins, and the boys and girls are ashamed, and have no desire ('laze along, push push').".

There is no doubt that in olden days the native ceremonial and social life stimulated considerable sexual freedom. In many places women were permitted to have lovers who were to a certain extent recognized socially, and who contributed payments to the husband.

3:Chinnery G, E-5 (1929)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

[177] [837] During the excitement of the night dances, *hot*, and in ordinary times, people simply went into the bush and indulged themselves whenever desire came and opportunity offered, and, if complications occurred, no one seemed to worry very much about them. Children were absorbed [848] into the social group of the mother, and apparently children without social fathers suffered little on that account. Now, however, all is changed, and the people are struggling to adapt their natural instincts to the modified sexual activity that has been laid down for them. There appears, however, to be little doubt that more or less adaptation may be achieved within the next generation.

It is evident, therefore, that in the clash between European and native culture, with the dominance of the European, the natives have suffered from a certain degree of apathy. First, the establishment of Government control and subjugation of hostile tribes, which left them without the very conditions that, paradoxically enough, gave them the incentive to survive. Next, the introduction of commercial enterprise, which led to the gradual alienation of the most fertile land and squeezed the inhabitants into odd corners, cut off from one another in places by the thrusts of European settlement, and which led to the taking away of virile males and females in numbers damaging to the population. Next, the road work and other Government enterprises that took the relatively few able-bodied men left in the villages away from their gardens and other native work, and undoubtedly upset still further the already bewildered inhabitants. Then, the administrative experiments endeavouring by force to blend socially and physically people differing in language and culture who but a short time before had been bitterly fighting one another. One needs little imagination to appreciate the sufferings of a small group of bush people compelled to build villages among their coastal enemies and live in them away from their own environment, conditions, traditional stimuli and other forces on which their very vitality depends, to live moreover practically on the bounty of their coastal enemies, who would resent the intrusion as much as the intruders. Out of such conditions there must have arisen innumerable and continuous anti-social practices on the part of both peoples to resist the objective of the German Government, and, realizing the constant state of fear and anxiety in which such groups would live, one wonders there are any survivors at all: then—on top of this—the missions attempting to transform the little that is left!

Such, briefly, and perhaps harshly, are the processes that have been operating actively in this district for the past 40 years. It is too early yet for any definite good to have come out of the changes and teaching, and it is doubtful whether permanent results will be achieved while the males and females of the original generation are still alive, as their presence and their influence will ever form a resisting barrier to the

3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

progress of the new cultures. Among the children now being educated, however, the changes wrought by the civilizing processes are steadily bearing fruit.

NATIVE LABOUR.

During the early years of German control, and while efforts were being made to amalgamate the native stocks, able-bodied men and women were recruited in relatively large numbers for work in different parts of the Territory and in German colonies beyond the Territory.

In 1909-10, however, the number of natives recruited for work outside the district decreased considerably, owing, no doubt, to the plantations then being developed in New Ireland, which were able to offer local employment to the natives of the district. In that year the recruiting of unmarried women from New Ireland was prohibited, a step by which the German Government hoped "that the extraordinary scarcity of women under which New Ireland has directly suffered for years in consequence of the unmarried women being taken away, will gradually be rectified, and so counteract the falling-off of the population."

Hoffman* points out that the able-bodied male natives recruited from the East coast in 1911 numbered 810, and in 1912 this number increased to 1,147. There was no record of the married and unmarried women recruited during that time. Hoffman goes on to say: "It is difficult to draw any conclusion from the present lists and records as to whether and how far the shortage of women brought about by recruiting at present exists. As has been mentioned before, records of the numbers of recruited women are lacking. . . . It is a fact, however, that the natural shortage of women is made more or less acute by recruiting. There is no proof to show that it is brought about by recruiting."

During my enumeration of the population the names of 925 men and 101 women were recorded "absent under indenture." This figure represents 12 per cent. of the total population, 25 per cent. of the adult male population and actually 27 per cent. of able-bodied males. Approximately 550 males and 60 females are employed by Europeans and Asiatics between Kavieng and Karu. The remainder are distributed in other parts of New Ireland and the Territory, a fair number of men and women being engaged in domestic service within the township of Rabaul, in which work they show special aptitude. Thirty-four per cent. of the labourers are married.

Native labourers employed on plantations near their villages are in the satisfactory position of being able to spend at least every week-end and often every night with their families. This is an ideal condition from the point of view both of the planter and of the labourer. It

*Nachrichten Gazette, German New Guinea, June, 1913.

3:Chinnery G, E-5 (1929)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

GENERAL.

114 In German times the declining condition of the population caused
161 the Government considerable alarm. In the Annual Report for 1907-08, it is pointed out that "the native population of the Bismarck Archipelago is decreasing in parts so rapidly that the fact is recognizable even without exact statistical reports. The grounds for the decrease of the population have not been definitely discovered for any of the districts concerned." The following, however, come into consideration:—Migration, especially resulting from recruiting of labourers; disease, especially epidemics; sexual diseases and the consequent decrease of birth-rate; abortion, and artificially-produced sterility; unproductiveness in consequence of degeneration and in-breeding."

Again, in 1910-11, the Annual Report calls attention to the misfortune that there is still evidence of a rapid decrease in the population of the whole of New Ireland.

114 In July, 1912, Dr. Hoffmann conducted a medical survey embracing
161 the population of Kavieng, and its surroundings as far down the east
177 coast as the village of Pinigindu. In the report of this survey he states that the retrogression of the population is very alarming, and that, if it goes on, the extinction of the population is in sight. He points out that it was shocking during the inspection to find how many long-standing marriages were childless, and how small was the issue in the fruitful marriages investigated. Hoffmann draws special attention to the deleterious effects that a native population suffers through the contact with the higher European civilized population, pointing out that the conditions of native life are thereby almost completely altered, that old customs lose their foundations, and with the introduction of trade and progress a complete revolution sets in, which must unsettle the native mind. He says there is scarcely a district which has not experienced more or less interruptive changes. He considers that the native, who formerly had need of a rising generation capable of fighting, now no longer sees the necessity for a virile posterity whose working capabilities can only benefit the European. He points out that all these disadvantages work subconsciously in the native mind, without any ultimate advantage ever entering his head. The change, being too sudden, results first of all in a retrogression of the people who have more or less lapsed into *taedium vitae*. What then is required, he suggests, is making the transition easy to accustom people to new conditions, to strengthen them, to guard them from illness, to improve their general conditions of living and so bring them a fresh lease of life. He questions the possible success even of this, but states that it must be tried even at

3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

the risk of a large expenditure and the abandonment of less pressing tasks. The section ends with a statement that, without a population capable of working, New Guinea is practically useless as a tropical colony.

After going into the diseases indicated during his examination, and relating the toll they had taken on the population, he summarizes briefly the opinions formed by his examination, and then submits under three headings certain measures for the adjustment of the problem, the most important of which actually agrees with what is now being done by the New Guinea Public Health Organization.

PRESENT MEDICAL CONTROL.

The villages along the road and mountains are regularly patrolled by the medical staff at Kavieng. Some of the planters and the missionaries treat any sick natives that are brought to them, and in addition to this a native medical Tul-tul is stationed in nearly every village, with a stock of medicine which he has been trained to use.

SUGGESTIONS.

The regeneration of the population of the east coast of New Ireland is, apart from administrative reasons, of the greatest importance to every European residing in the district, and from what I have seen of the missionaries and planters they can be relied upon to play their part in any scheme with this end in view.

A large part of tthe district lies too far from Kavieng to be effectively controlled by the present medical organization; and the excellent medical patrol system, which is doing so much good in a general way for the native population cannot possibly be expected to cope with the special conditions that affect the issue and survival rates of the community. What is required, therefore, is an examination of the district by a qualified and experienced medical officer, with the object of submitting a report on the most practical way of dealing with the problem.

A second factor in the scheme of regeneration is to improve the general conditions of native life, and study carefully anything standing in the way of welfare with the object of introducing necessary changes.

The primary factor in this scheme is sympathetic and thorough local administration. The present system of village control by Lulualis and Tul-tuls under the supervision of district officials is a step in the right direction, provided the natives appointed by the Government are men acceptable to the villagers themselves, and represent adequately the various social groups into which the people are divided. No scheme of local administration, however, can possibly function satisfactorily

4: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

accounting for it. He wrote, "We have here only another effect of the loss of interest in life which I have held to be so potent in enhancing mortality. The people say themselves: 'Why should we bring children into the world only to work for the white man?' " [50]

Pitt-Rivers has emphasized still more strongly the influence of psychological factors from another point of view and suggests that the destruction of cultural institutions such as magic, economic structure, etc., results in boredom or loss of the *joie de vivre*, which in turn might operate to exterminate a race.[51] He thinks that even though there be normal sexual intercourse, the woman might not conceive because her emotional life had been disturbed, which he would trace to the break up of the native culture through white contact.[52]

The writer of this paper would not deny the possible influence of these psychological factors when they were operative, but the point is that the psychological factors mentioned by Dr. Rivers and by Pitt-Rivers are not present among the people on whom this study was made and therefore cannot be adduced as a cause for their decline. The fundamental aspects of the native culture have not been broken up, and these people are not bored, nor have they lost their *joie de vivre*. Although there has been a fair amount of white contact, and cannibalism and warfare have been abolished by the mandated government, their kinship organization, economic structure, ritual and sexual life, are still actively functioning according to their traditional custom. The people are busy with their daily work (gardening and fishing) and with preparations for the many ritual feasts and dances. They flirt, marry, and have their *affaires du coeur* in a very happy, casual fashion and do not, as Dr. W. H. R. Rivers suggests, ask themselves why they should bring children into the world. They are, as far as can be observed, quite happy, decidedly not bored, and have a real interest in life.

The psychological factors mentioned by the two authors just quoted may be operative on the generation of children now growing up. Many of these have been to mission schools, where they are given the concept of shame in connection with sexual matters, particularly in regard to extra-marital intercourse, which is a very indigenous part of their culture. White contacts are increasing and it is probably only a matter of time before the native culture will be broken up. What the

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[51] Pitt-Rivers, G. H. L. F.—*The Clash of Cultures*, London, 1927, pp. 142-148.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

4: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

psychological effect of this will be on the birth and death rates of future generations can be, at the moment, only a matter of conjecture.

It is thus necessary to point out that while these psychological factors may be of significance in accounting for a declining population, they are not present among this particular declining people. The adult women on whom this study was made have not been to mission schools and the effect of mission teaching on them is very superficial. The fundamental aspects of their culture have not been destroyed and they have not lost their interest in life.[33]

There is one factor, mentioned by Dr. Rivers but not stressed, which might tentatively be considered as a possible cause for the decline in population, and that is the introduction of the so-called "white man's diseases." While there are no medical records for the group of people on whom this study was made, there are some fragmentary medical records for the whole Mandated Territory of New Guinea, which includes New Ireland.[34] These are based on treatments in native nospitals at the European centers and the natives are mostly indentured laborers from all over the territory. The records can be used to indicate that certain diseases exist in the Territory, some of which appear more widespread than others. It is of interest to note here those that might have any influence on infant mortality.

The reports all mention tuberculosis as being rather widespread. We are told that "tuberculosis, pneumonia and other respiratory diseases cause approximately 50 per cent of all native deaths in Rabaul," and that these diseases are new among these native races.[35] In 1926-27 tuberculosis accounted for about 32 per cent of the total deaths of natives in the series under review.[36] In 1927-28, 103 cases of tuberculosis were treated in native hospitals, and these cases had a mortality rate of 33 per cent, accounting for 13 per cent of the total mortality of hospital cases.[37] In 1928-29, 57 per cent of all the native deaths occurring in native hospitals were due to tuberculosis, pneumonia and dysentery.[38]

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[33] In the writer's forthcoming book, the life of the society as it is functioning today will be described in detail. The contact of other cultures will not be neglected and an attempt will be made to evaluate the effect of this contact.

[34] Reports to the Council of the League of Nations on Administration of the Territory of New Guinea, *Canberra*.

[35] *Ibid.*, 1924-25, p. 17.

[36] *Ibid.*, 1926-27, p. 133.

[37] *Ibid.*, 1927-28, p. 89.

[38] *Ibid.*, 1928-29, p. 26.

At appearance of first tooth	ɑnːŋ asːl nuji (eating for tooth)
After ritual washing of a girl at her first menstruation	tsː tsːl (name of leaf used in washing)
Marriage	mɑrːl (name of playful fighting occurring between women of opposite moieties at this time)
Circumcision	Lual ːnɣ tsːsaukɣ (feast for cutting penis)
Recovery from illness	Bis Bambullɣ (make taro die[4])
Going away a long distance	ɑnːŋ atɣbasiɣɑp (eat and go)
Feast at death	Kosːrɣ lual (Make feast)
Feast some time after death has occurred	Kosːrɣ lual mau tungän (free translation: make feast for dead; literally, implies feast is held on ground where men are buried)
Malanggon[5] rites	Kosːrɣ lual (make feast)
To make arrangements for future malanggon rites	ägiŋlːnːt bul (mark pig)
To end quarrel	dːmbii (finish)
Before war[6]	Lual tanta bul mɑrːl (feast to bring fight)
To make peace between warring villages	dːmbii (finish)
Feast given for possible mates of female infants	ɑnːŋ tsːŋ tsːl (eating play)
When there is abundance of food	ɛnɣnːn aLːt (food much)
To repay women who helped an ill woman	ɑnːŋ oba (eating, communal work)
To repay workers on a house or garden fence	ɑnːŋ oba (eating, communal work)
At completion of my house[6a]	rsːali anuɣ (open house)

During the ten months of my visit I attended eighty-five feasts, a large majority of which took place in the village of Lesu. The others occurred in neighboring villages, but were also attended by Lesu people.[7]

The eighty-five feasts fall into the following classes:

Feasts at death	9

[4] The tops of this taro are thrown away and not replanted as is usually the case.

[5] Malanggon is the name of an elaborate carving displayed at certain mortuary rites.

[6] Warfare has been abolished by the mandated government and the feasts connected with it are therefore no longer held. The feast before war and the one to make peace between warring villages are the only ones on the list which were not held during my visit.

[6a] This feast was called by a different name from the one ordinarily used to repay the workers on a native house, and is really an introduced element in the culture.

[7] Not included in this number is the communal eating on the part of the men every day for several weeks after a death. These might well be considered ritual feasts, but I have included only those which mark a very specific occasion, such as those in the foregoing list.